

IN THE CLAIMS

1. (Original) The method of reducing stress in a center pivot irrigation system during a period of time that the system is not functioning and is experiencing cooler temperatures with the system having:

- a) a pivot support assembly including a horizontally extending pipe portion;
- b) an elongated irrigation pipeline, having inner and outer ends, supported upon a plurality of spaced-apart drive towers;
- c) the inner end of the pipeline being connected to the horizontally extending pipe portion of the pivot support assembly;

comprising the following steps:

- d) disconnecting the inner end of the pipeline from the horizontally extending pipe portion of the pivot support assembly;
- e) while maintaining the inner end of the pipeline in alignment with the horizontally extending pipe portion of the pivot support assembly to facilitate the reconnection of the inner end of the pipeline to the horizontally extending pipe portion of the pivot support assembly when the system is going to be used to irrigate.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein a support assembly is secured to and extends between the horizontally extending pipe portion and the inner end of the pipeline.

3. (Original) The method of claim 1 wherein a flex joint is provided on said horizontally extending pipe portion.

1 4. (Original) The method of reducing stress in a center pivot infringement
irrigation system during a period of time that the system will not be operating having:

- 3 a) a pivot support assembly including an upstanding pipe connected to a
source of water;
- 5 b) a horizontally extending pipe portion at the upper end of the upstanding
pipe which is in fluid communication therewith;
- 7 c) an elongated irrigation pipeline supported upon a plurality of spaced-
apart driver towers and having inner and outer ends;
- 10 d) the inner end of the pipeline being fluidly connected to the horizontally
extending pipe portion;

comprising the following steps:

- 13 e) disconnecting the inner end of the pipeline from the horizontally
extending pipe portion;
- 15 f) while maintaining the inner end of the pipeline in alignment with the
horizontally extending pipe portion to ease the reconnection of the inner
end of the pipeline to the horizontally extending pipe portion.

18 5. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein a support assembly is secured to
20 and extends between the horizontally extending pipe portion and the inner end of the
pipeline.

23 6. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein a flex joint is provided on said
horizontally extending pipe portion.

1 7. (Original) An irrigation system, comprising:
a pivot support structure;
an elongated irrigation pipeline supported upon a plurality of spaced-apart driver
towers;
5 said pipeline having inner and outer ends;
said pivot support structure including a generally vertically disposed pipe fluidly
connected to a source of water, and a horizontally extending pipe portion at the
upper end of said generally vertically disposed pipe;
10 said inner end of said pipeline being fluidly connected to said horizontally extending
pipe portion
a disconnect alignment assembly operatively secured to and extending between said
horizontally extending pipe portion and said inner end of said pipeline;
15 said disconnect alignment assembly adapted to maintain said inner end of said
pipeline in alignment with said pipe portion when said inner end of said pipeline
is disconnected from said horizontally extending pipe portion to reduce stress in
the system during a period of time that the system will not be functioning and to
facilitate the subsequent reconnection of the inner end of the pipeline to the
20 horizontally extending pipe portion when the system is going to be used to
irrigate.

25 8. (Original) The irrigation system of claim 7 wherein a flex joint is operatively
secured to said pipe portion.

1 9. (Original) The irrigation system of claim 7 wherein said disconnect
alignment assembly comprises:

- (a) a first support means secured to said horizontally extending pipe portion;
- (b) an elongated member having inner and outer ends, said inner end of
5 said elongated member being secured to said first support;
- (c) a second support means on said inner end of said pipeline;
- (d) said second support means movably receiving said elongated member.

10 10. (Original) The irrigation system of claim 9 wherein said second support
includes a pair of horizontally spaced-apart support members; each of said support
members having upper and lower rollers mounted thereon; said elongated member
being movably received between said upper and lower rollers on said support
members.

15 11. (Original) The irrigation system of claim 10 wherein said second support is
removably clamped onto said inner end of said pipeline.

 12. (New) The method of reducing stress in a center pivot irrigation system
during a period of time that the system is not functioning and is experiencing cooler
temperatures with the system having:

- a) a center pivot support;
- b) an elongated irrigation pipeline extending outwardly from the center pivot
support and which is comprised of a plurality of pipe sections, each of
the pipe sections having inner and outer ends;
- 25 c) a plurality of spaced-apart drive towers supporting the irrigation pipeline;

1 comprising the following steps:

- d) disconnecting the outer end of a first pipe section from the inner end of a second pipe section;
- e) while maintaining the inner end of the second pipe section in alignment
5 with the outer end of the first pipe section to facilitate the reconnection of the inner end of the second pipe section to the outer end of the first pipe section when the system is going to be used to irrigate.

10 13. (New) The method of claim 12 wherein a support assembly is secured to and extends between the outer end of the first pipe section and the inner end of the second pipe section.

14. (New) An irrigation system, comprising:
a pivot support structure;
an elongated irrigation pipeline supported upon a plurality of spaced-apart drive
15 towers;
said pipeline being comprised of a plurality of pipe sections, having inner and outer ends;
a disconnect alignment assembly operatively secured to and extending between the
20 outer end of a first pipe section and the inner end of a second pipe section adjacent thereto;
said disconnect alignment assembly adapted to maintain said inner end of said second pipe section in alignment with said outer end of said first pipe section when said
25 first and second pipe sections are disconnected from one another to reduce

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stress in the system during a period of time that the system will not be functioning and to facilitate the subsequent reconnection of the inner end of said second pipe section to the outer end of said first pipe section when the system is going to be used to irrigate.

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